

Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW PRIORITY

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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 219691

E.O. 11652: ADS, DECLAS 12-31-73

TAGS: PINT, UR, OEXC

SUBJECT: ARENA STAGE PRESS CONFERENCE

1. ARENA STAGE HELD A PRESS CONFERENCE 5 NOVEMBER IN WASHINGTON ON SUBJECT OF RECENT TOUR. PRINCIPALS SPOKE BRIEFLY AND POSITIVELY ABOUT TOUR, EMPHASIZING WARM FRIENDSHIPS MADE WITH SOVIET COUNTERPARTS. ACTRESS DIANE WIEST SAID SHE AND SEVERAL OTHER ACTORS HAD MET WITH SOVIET JEWS IN MOSCOW, HAD GIVEN THEM LITERATURE IN HEBREW AND HAD RECEIVED AND TAKEN BACK TO US SIX UNPUBLISHED SHORT STORIES WRITTEN BY A SOVIET JEW. TASS CORRESPONDENT VLADIMIR VASHEDCHENKO WAS PRESENT IN AUDIENCE WHEN THESE REMARKS WERE MADE.
2. IN ANTICIPATION OF POSSIBLE QUESTION ON SUBJECT OF ARENA STAGE JEWISH CONTACTS IN USSR, DEPARTMENT HAS PREPARED FOLLOWING PRESS GUIDANCE ON IF ASKED ONLY BASIS. BEGIN QUOTE. THE TUESDAY NOVEMBER 6 EDITION OF THE WASHINGTON POST REPORTED THAT AN ACTRESS WITH THE ARENA STAGE COMPANY THAT RECENTLY PERFORMED IN MOSCOW AND LENINGRAD AS PART OF THE US-USSR EXCHANGE AGREEMENT

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HAD BROUGHT OUT OF THE SOVIET UNION SIX UNPUBLISHED

SHORT STORIES AND HAD DISTRIBUTED HEBREW LITERATURE TO SOVIET CITIZENS. IN ALL INSTANCES OF US CITIZENS VISITING OTHER COUNTRIES UNDER US GOVERNMENT SPONSORSHIP, SPECIFIC INSTRUCTIONS ARE GIVEN TO ADHERE TO ALL LAWS OF

FOREIGN COUNTRIES VISITED. ALL MEMBERS OF THE ARENA STAGE COMPANY WERE GIVEN THESE SPECIFIC INSTRUCTIONS BEFORE DEPARTURE TO THE SOVIET UNION. END QUOTE. EMBASSY MAY ALSO DRAW UPON THIS GUIDANCE IF ASKED ONLY.

3. FYI ESCORT OFFICER HAGEN HAS LEARNED PRIVATELY FROM ARENA STAGE ACTOR HOWARD WITT, THAT AMONG SOVIET JEWS CONTACTED BY ARENA ACTORS WERE ALEKSANDR LUNTZ, ALEKSANDR LERNER, VLADIMIR SLEPAK AND VIKTOR FAIERMARK. GATHERING WAS HELD EVENING OF OCTOBER 6 AT APARTMENT OF LUNTZ. GIFTS TRANSMITTED FROM JEWISH SOURCES IN WASHINGTON INCLUDED RUSSIAN-HEBREW DICTIONARIES, HEBREW PRAYER BOOKS, RELIGIOUS ORNAMENTS. WITT GROUP RECEIVED SHORT STORIES SIGNED SAMEKH SHIN (PSEUDONYM) AND PASSED THEM TO NEWSWEEK CONTRIBUTING EDITOR LEON VOLKOV. STORIES WILL POSSIBLY BE PUBLISHED IN ATLANTIC MONTHLY. ACTORS ATTEMPTED CONTACT V. PANOV IN LENINGRAD BUT WERE UNSUCCESSFUL. HOWEVER, CLOTHES FOR PANOVA AND WIFE WERE LEFT WITH RELIABLE LENINGRAD JEWS FOR TRANSMITTAL TO PANOVA, ACCORDING TO WITT. RUSH

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